

EPA Proposes Final Cleanup Plan

Northwestern Barrel Site

South Milwaukee, Wisconsin

February 2004

Share your opinions

EPA invites your comments on its proposed cleanup plan. Your input helps EPA determine the best course of action. You may fill out and return the enclosed form, or e-mail your comments to EPA community involvement coordinator Bri Bill using contact information on Page 3.

Your comments must be postmarked by the last day in the comment period. To request a public hearing to present your comments verbally, contact Bri Bill by Thursday, Feb. 12.

Public comment period Feb. 5 - March 8, 2004

Note:

This proposal addresses only the property currently owned by Towne Realty Inc. – the area generally bordered by the fence. EPA continues to work on plans for cleanup of potentially affected adjacent residential areas.

Check out EPA's Web site

For more information about the Northwestern Barrel site go to:
epa.gov/region5/sites/marinacliffs

Soil in two small areas of the Northwestern Barrel site will be dug up and disposed of off-site under a final cleanup plan proposed by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, a wetland that existed before earlier cleanups will be restored and controls put in place to limit soil erosion. Finally, contaminated ground water in two areas will be monitored until natural processes restore ground water to EPA cleanup standards. This plan protects human health and the environment, and once in place will complete the final cleanup activities required for the Northwestern Barrel site.

Residents have 30 days to comment on EPA's proposed plan. See the box at the left to find out how. Based on public comments, EPA may modify the proposal.

A draft report completed in January gives details on what is known about contamination at the site, previous cleanup activities and remaining contamination at the site. This report, titled Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis Report February 2004¹, also provides detailed information about the cleanup proposal. The report is available at the South Milwaukee Public Library.



The stone-lined drainage swale will be improved to reduce soil erosion from the upland area.

¹Section 300.415(n)(4)(ii) and (iii) of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan requires EPA to provide a brief description of the report in the newspaper and provide the public an opportunity to comment on it.

Health risk to people and the environment

The cleanup work that began in 1997 has successfully removed nearly all the contamination, however some small amounts remain. To decide if cleanup done so far is sufficient, the 2004 report evaluated the remaining possible risks to people and the environment, now and in the future. The evaluation considered risk to people walking across the site where they might breathe in, eat or touch small amounts of contaminated soil, or touch water in the ravine. In addition, since the site is being considered for future residential redevelopment, risk to residents and construction or utility workers digging into the soil was considered. Finally, risk to possible future residents from eating homegrown garden produce was evaluated.

The evaluation concluded that the risk to people occasionally walking across the site met EPA's standards. Once the additional cleanup described below is complete, risk to any future residents and workers will be reduced and meet EPA's requirements.

About the Northwestern Barrel site

The Northwestern Barrel site is the location of the former Northwestern Barrel Co., a barrel reconditioning business that operated from the early 1940s to the mid-1960s. Its operations included the handling, washing and refurbishing of steel drums and wooden barrels. The company operated on approximately 18 acres – including 13 acres of now-vacant land along the shoreline of Lake Michigan – as well as on land where condominiums now sit extending west to 5th Avenue and south to Marina Road and the city of South Milwaukee's easement. For the purposes of investigation and cleanup, EPA divided the site into two areas: the 13-acre eastern parcel which includes a deep ravine, lake bluff, and upland areas and is owned by Towne Realty Inc., and a smaller western parcel with several multi-family residential developments. The proposed plan described in this mailer addresses only the 13-acre eastern parcel, the approximate area bordered by a chain-link fence, the ravine and the beach.

Residual chemicals from barrel handling, cleaning and storage resulted in extensive soil contamination in upland areas, the bluff and ravine, and to some extent ground water beneath the site. Investigations beginning in the 1990s revealed that the heavily wooded ravine and lake bluff contained 55-gallon barrels, drums and other containers that appeared to be filled or partially filled with hazardous materials. In addition, waste piles and disposal areas of building debris, cinders and paint waste were evident along the slopes of the ravine. Containers were

exposed along the lake bluff and ravine. Two buried disposal pits in the southeast corner contained a dark, oily sludge. Contaminants found include lead and other heavy metals, volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds, pesticides and PCBs.

Beginning in 1995, EPA issued a series of legal orders to a number of parties found to be potentially responsible for cleanup under federal law. These orders required the potentially responsible parties to investigate and clean up the site. Beginning in 1997, under EPA and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources supervision, contractors for a group of the potentially responsible parties dug up, stockpiled and disposed of nearly 9,000 tons of waste and soil from the disposal pits and surrounding area. This work was followed in 1998 by additional excavation and off-site disposal of more than 170,000 tons of waste, debris and contaminated soil from the ravine, lake bluff and upland area. Since then, tests reveal that two small areas of contaminated soil remain. These areas require additional cleanup, as proposed in this mailer.

Proposed final cleanup plan

EPA's cleanup proposal consists of four activities. Refer to the enclosed map for locations for the proposed work. Wisconsin DNR agrees with the proposed activities.

Soil excavation: EPA proposes digging up soil from two small areas along the south boundary of the site. This soil contains lead, PCBs, and two solvent-like volatile organic compounds (trichloroethylene and benzene) at levels higher than federal guidelines. An estimated 1,200 cubic yards – or 40 truck loads – would be removed and trucked off-site for disposal in a licensed facility.



Ground water will be routinely tested under the plan proposed by EPA.

Ground-water monitoring: Because ground water at two locations (MW-6 and MW-4) contains slightly elevated levels of trichloroethylene and benzene, EPA wants to monitor the ground water there until cleanup goals are reached.

Wetland restoration: Contamination and the work necessary to clean it up affected the native plants growing in the wetland on the shoreline at the south end of the site. This area will be restored with plants native to the area and soil will be added or moved to ensure proper drainage.



The wetland at the base of the bluff will be restored.

Erosion control: Additional measures will be put in place to reduce soil erosion in the stone-lined drainage swale located on the Lake Michigan slope leading from the upland area to the beach. These measures will help prevent new gullies from forming.

Next steps

EPA will consider all public comments submitted during the comment period before choosing a final cleanup plan. EPA will provide a written response to comments in a document called an action memorandum. Soon after, the Agency, with the assistance of DNR, will review design plans prepared by consultants for the potentially responsible parties. Field work could begin as early as this spring. Once the work is complete, EPA will review all work done to date, and assuming all federal and state requirements are satisfied, release the site for use by the property owner, Towne Realty.

What about the adjacent residential area?

EPA and the potentially responsible parties are preparing a second report to evaluate the nature and extent of contamination in the residential area, which will also lead to a proposal to address contamination in the residential area adjacent to the Towne Realty property. EPA will share this proposal with residents, likely this year.

To learn more

If you would like to learn more about EPA's proposed cleanup plan or the Northwestern Barrel site, please look at the site files in the South Milwaukee Public Library or contact a member of the cleanup team listed below. Or, check out EPA's Web site at epa.gov/region5/sites/marinacliffs.

South Milwaukee Public Library

1907 10th Ave.
South Milwaukee, Wis.

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EPA Proposes a Final Cleanup Plan for the Northwestern Barrel Site Look Inside to Find Out More

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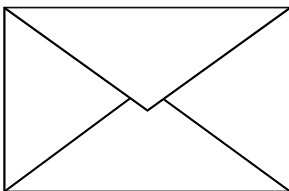
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Region 5
Office of Public Affairs (P-19J)
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Chicago, IL 60604

**Northwestern Barrel Site:
EPA Proposes Final Cleanup Plan**

EPA is interested in your comments on the proposed cleanup plan for the Northwestern Barrel site. You may use the space below to write your comments, then fold and mail the form. Or, you may submit comments on your own paper. Comments must be postmarked by Monday, March 8, 2004. You may also submit your comments to Bri Bill at bill.briana@epa.gov. If you have any questions, please contact Bri Bill at (800) 621-8431, Ext. 36646, or direct at (312) 353-6646.

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Name _____

Affiliation

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

NORTHWESTERN BARREL SITE PUBLIC COMMENT SHEET

Detach this page, fold on dashed lines, staple, stamp, and mail

Name _____
Address _____
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FIRST CLASS

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